



March 17, 2022

Antonina Simeti, Chair  
Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County  
95 Franklin Street  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Re: Village of Hamburg Zoning Ordinance Adoption

Dear Ms. McKee,

The Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County (FPC) has reviewed the above-referenced document referred to us by the Erie County Department of Environment and Planning. We recognize the hard work involved in updating the Village's zoning ordinance and believe this is a great opportunity for the Village to begin directly addressing our local food system. We offer the following comments:

- The FPC's 2020 *Local Food Action Plan* encourages "the support of food-system friendly zoning ordinances and policies to encourage small-scale food production in communities; residential food sales; farm stands at community gardens..." The Village should consider incorporating framework for community gardens in the Ordinance. Community gardens grow healthy communities. Not only are they sources of fresh food, research shows they play an important role in other aspects of public health. They increase physical exercise, increase social connection, foster intergenerational and intercultural experiences and they have shown significant mental health benefit as well. The Village of Hamburg is increasingly the chosen destination for young families in WNY and a community garden, especially one that incorporates aspects for play and learning about agriculture for all ages, would be a wonderful addition to the village.
- The Village should also consider adding language permitting the keeping of backyard chickens for personal use. Nearby, the Town of Hamburg allows the keeping of up to six hens on single-family properties by permit-only. The City of Buffalo also has a chicken ordinance permitting the keeping of up to five hens in any residential zoning district.
- Finally, the Village should incorporate food and yard waste composting regulations in its new zoning ordinance in commercial and mixed use districts. As the [New York State Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law](#) seeks to increase the number of composting facilities across the State they can become a good source of jobs and revenue for the Village.

Members of the Council would be happy to meet with you or your staff to offer further detail, as well as to review any parts of our *Local Food Action Plan* or our work to implement it, including how best to coordinate with your planning efforts. An electronic version of the Plan can be found at [erie.gov/foodactionplan](http://erie.gov/foodactionplan).

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Antonina Simeti  
Chair, Food Policy Council of Buffalo & Erie County

AS: seg

cc: Sarah Gatti, Erie County Department of Environment and Planning

***Our mission is to advocate for an equitable and sustainable food system for the people of Buffalo and Erie County.***